



Corbridge Roman Station

Ministry of Public Building and Works OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK

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The Site

IN THE *Antonine Itinerary*, a work that forms a guide to the main roads of the Roman Empire in the third century of the present era, the second British route runs from *Bremenium* (High Rochester, in Redesdale) through *Eboracum* (York) to *Praetorium* (apparently a mistake for *Petuaria*, now Brough on Humber); the first stage on this journey is given as twenty miles to CORSTOPITUM, and since the sixteenth century it has been recognised that this must be the name of the Roman station on the north bank of the Tyne between Hexham and Corbridge. What the name means is not known; it is not Celtic, and unless it is a pre-Celtic one, it can only be concluded that the manuscripts of the *Itinerary* in this as in other cases have not preserved the correct spelling. In medieval times the site was known as Corchester, but Corstopitum is now in general use, and the name will be retained for convenience in the present guide.

Corstopitum occupies a flat-topped hill rising some sixty feet above the Tyne, towards which the ground slopes rather steeply; it is protected on the west by the valley of the Cor Burn, and on the east by a slighter depression that separates the Roman site from its English successor, Corbridge. To the north, the ground at first falls away very slightly, and then rises gradually towards the high ground along which runs Hadrian's Wall. Tactically the position is a strong one, of a kind often chosen by the Romans for their forts; but it was to its strategic position that Corstopitum owed its importance. Here the main trunk road to the north (Dere Street, as the English first called it, though it has sometimes been known as Watling Street) is crossed by the Stanegate, the early road from Carlisle that probably owes its construction to Agricola (A.D. 78-84); it is probable, though not yet certain, that the Stanegate was continued eastwards, past Newburn, to South Shields, and that a branch-road from Whitley Castle, near Alston, joined Dere Street a few yards south of its bridge over the Tyne. Corstopitum, therefore, was at an important road-junction, and provided a convenient base for armies operating in Scotland and for the Tyne-Solway line alike. The main reason for the selection of this particular site was no doubt the fact that at this point is one of the best crossings of the Tyne, with firm foundations for a bridge, the piers of which may still be seen when the river is low.

The first recorded excavations on the site were those conducted in search of treasure by King John in A.D. 1201. 'Nothing was found,' says the chronicler Roger de Hoveden, 'except stones marked with bronze and iron and lead'; it seems clear that the excavators must have come across the remains of the fountain (see p. 15), the massive stones of which were tied together with iron clamps set in lead, and it was left

to a later age to discover gold coins at Corstopitum. The antiquaries John Leland and William Camden visited it in the sixteenth century, and were struck by the abundance of its remains; but John Horsley, early in the eighteenth century, noted that the Roman site was almost entirely levelled and under the plough. Indeed, since Anglian times it had been used as a quarry for building-stone, and Hexham Priory and Corbridge parish church and countless secular buildings had drawn upon its convenient supply.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the buildings in the south-west quarter of the site, which was the property of the Duke of Northumberland, were largely removed 'to promote agricultural improvements', and a number of discoveries resulted; and in 1861-62 some digging by William Coulson resulted in the discovery of the north abutment of the Roman bridge and one or two structures, including part of a bath-building, inside the town; but it was not until the establishment of a special excavation committee, under the auspices of the Northumberland County History Committee, that the systematic examination of the site began. From 1906 until the outbreak of war in 1914 excavations continued, and resulted in the recovery of the greater part of the plan of Corstopitum, of a large and important collection of sculptures, inscriptions, coins, pottery and small objects, and of considerable evidence for the history of the place in the Roman period. In 1933 the central part of the site, containing the most important of the buildings discovered in 1906-14, was placed in the custody of the Ancient Monuments Department, and in the following year the Durham University Excavation Committee undertook the further examination of the site, as a result of which it has proved possible to establish its structural history and to throw much light on the character of the place and the way of life of its inhabitants during the three and a half centuries of its history.

Reports of the excavations of 1906-14 will be found in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, third series, vols. III-XII, and there are convenient summaries in the *Northumberland County History*, vol. X, and *Archaeologia Aeliana*, fourth series, vol. XI. The results obtained in 1934 and later years have been reported in subsequent volumes of the latter series, particularly vols. XIII-XV, XVII, XXI, XXVIII XXX, XXXI, XXXIII and XXXVII; the present guide takes all these papers into account.

The history of the site

FOR a generation after the invasion of Britain by the army of Claudius (A.D. 43) the northern frontier of the new province of *Britannia* ran from the Humber to the Mersey. The Brigantes, the most numerous British state, whose territory included the whole of England to the north of that frontier as far as the Tyne-Solway line, retained their independence, though acknowledging Roman suzerainty; and although on occasions the Romans found it necessary to engage in operations against the Brigantes or sections of them, no attempt was made to annex their territory. It was not until the accession of Vespasian (A.D. 69) that a change in policy occurred. The first governor appointed to Britain by the new emperor was Petillius Cerialis (A.D. 71-74), under whom the greater part of the territory of the Brigantes, and perhaps all of it, was annexed; the Ninth Legion moved forward from Lincoln to a new base at York, and fresh forts were established at sites such as Malton and probably even as far north as Carlisle. The next governor, Julius Frontinus (A.D. 74-78), turned to the western frontier, and completed the conquest of Wales. The last stage in Vespasian's forward policy comes with the appointment to Britain of Julius Agricola (A.D. 78-84). After crushing a rising in North Wales, Agricola turned to complete the northern conquests of Cerialis, in which he had played a part as commander of the Twentieth Legion; and in a series of campaigns he advanced the frontier beyond the Firth of Forth. It was probably Agricola rather than Cerialis who constructed Dere Street and the Stanegate, and the first Roman fort at Corstopitum seems by the associated remains to belong to the period of Agricola's governorship, but that fort represents the period when active operations in the field were over, and the Romans were securing their hold on the country by the establishment of a series of permanent stations, each containing an infantry battalion (*cohors*) or a cavalry regiment (*ala*).

These forts were rectangular earthworks surrounded by ditches and enclosing timber buildings. Such a fort was constructed at Corstopitum, on the east side of Dere Street; parts of its rampart, built of turf blocks in the normal Roman manner, its ditches and some of its internal buildings have been found by excavation, sometimes deep below the level of the buildings now exposed; the pottery from its occupation-levels and rubbish-tips shows that it was occupied from about A.D. 80-123, and it underwent various structural modifications (including a complete reconstruction after a disaster) during that period: but much more excavation will be needed before a clear picture of this earliest Roman lay-out can be provided. The fort's first garrison was probably the Gallic cavalry regiment known as the *ala Petriana*, to judge by the tombstone of a standard-bearer of that unit, now to be seen in Hexham

Priory, that must have come from one of the cemeteries of Corstopitum; the regiment was 1,000 strong, the only one of that size in the army of Britain, and its presence at Corstopitum emphasises the military importance of the site at that period.

Soon after A.D. 90 (the exact date is not known, but it cannot have been very much later than A.D. 100) the Roman forces seem to have been withdrawn from Scotland, perhaps because the transfer of troops to reinforce the armies of the Danube had left the garrison of Britain with more recently conquered territory than it could safely attempt to hold; and for some years the Stanegate may have marked the effective northern limit of the province. But the history of Britain in the first twenty years of the second century is still too imperfectly known for us to judge how the site was affected by the military operations under Trajan's governors (A.D. 98-117), attested by one or two inscriptions, or in A.D. 117 and the following years, when the biographer of Hadrian records a war in Britain, the successful termination of which was marked by the issue of a special series of that emperor's coins in A.D. 118 and 119. In A.D. 122 Hadrian himself came to Britain, and in that year began the building of his new frontier, the Wall; as first planned it was a police and customs line, and Corstopitum and other forts on the Stanegate remained in commission, to give such military support as it might need; but in a year or two it was found necessary to build new forts on the line of the Wall itself, and Corstopitum was evacuated: a cavalry fort near Halton, three miles to the north-east, replaced that at Corstopitum, though the *ala Petriana* itself had already been transferred to Stanwix, astride the western trunk route into Scotland; and for something like fifteen years the site was left unoccupied. It was not until the accession of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161) and the reoccupation of Scotland by his governor, Lollius Urbicus, that its position on Dere Street brought Corstopitum once more into prominence.

Among the inscriptions found there, fragments of two ornate slabs (now to be seen in the museum) record work done in A.D. 139 and 140 by the Second Legion under the governorship of Lollius Urbicus; both inscriptions were found re-used in later structures, but it seems probable that they were originally set up in the stone-built granaries of a new fort, the ramparts, ditches and internal buildings of which are gradually being traced by excavations between and in some places below the structures now visible on the site; here and there it will be possible to leave portions of its buildings on view, but for the most part they must remain out of sight. The south rampart of the new fort probably ran close to the southern limit of the Ministry of Public Building



and Works enclosure, the east and west sides of which correspond approximately to its east and west ramparts; it is not yet known how far it stretched to the north. This fort was drastically remodelled shortly after A.D. 161, in the governorship of Calpurnius Agricola, to whose activities two fine building-inscriptions in the museum bear witness.

In the last years of the second century the whole military system in the north of Britain was thrown into disorder by an invasion of the Maeatae, a northern tribe, at a time when the army of Britain under its general, Clodius Albinus, was fighting for supremacy against Septimius Severus (emperor A.D. 193-211) in Gaul. On the latter's victory at the battle of Lugdunum (the modern Lyons: A.D. 197), Virius Lupus was sent to Britain as the first governor of the new regime, and found it necessary to buy off the Maeatae before the work of reconstruction could be put in hand. By about A.D. 205, Lupus and his successor, Alfenus Senecio, had succeeded in carrying the work of repair as far north as Hadrian's Wall and the outlying forts to the north of it, and

both governors are represented by inscriptions from Corstopitum, where several of the buildings now visible were built or begun in this period. The reconquest of Scotland was reserved for Severus himself, who arrived with large reinforcements three years later, and remained in Britain until his death at York in February 211; during his campaigns in Scotland, as in the governorship of Lollius Urbicus, there must have been great activity at Corstopitum. Indeed, it seems probable that the great store-house (site XI) and granaries (sites VII and X) were put in hand to serve as a depot on one of his main lines of communication to the north; an inscription in the museum, unfortunately incomplete, mentions an officer in charge of granaries at the time of the most fortunate British expedition, which is best interpreted as that of Severus. It may be that when that expedition had been successfully completed, it was intended to establish a legionary fortress here, nearer to the northern frontier than that at York; certain features of the Severan lay-out of the site suggest that such a fortress was contemplated. But the death of Severus brought a change in policy; his sons withdrew the garrisons from Scotland, and reverted finally to the Hadrianic frontier-system in preference to that of Antoninus Pius; in consequence it was no longer necessary to maintain a large garrison at Corstopitum, and henceforward the place lost its predominantly military complexion, though two small detachments of legionary craftsmen were presently stationed here, in walled compounds fitted in, on the south side of the main east to west street, behind a group of temples which can be shown to have been built in the early years of the third century, and are best explained as additions to the amenities of the site after the project of a legionary fortress had been given up. The granaries and the compounds now formed the only official buildings in the place, unless the elaborate corridor-house, on the east side of Dere Street between the Stanegate and the Tyne bridge, was the residence of some imperial official, or a posting-house for official travellers; the great store-house was left unfinished, and parts of it seem to have been completed by private individuals for use as shops or the like, and until the close of the Roman occupation it was as a town that the place grew and prospered.

The official buildings already referred to were soon surrounded by houses of another kind; for the most part simple rectangular structures, with their ends fronting on the street, that served as shop and workshop and living-accommodation alike, but many of them may well have had upper storeys, and have housed more substantial merchants, living in comfort if not luxury; others were occupied by artisans, leather-workers and potters and smiths, some of whose tools may still be seen

in the museum. Such houses lined both Stanegate and Dere Street for a considerable distance from the centre of the town, and elsewhere were connected with these main roads by other roads or lanes on a roughly rectangular lay-out. The population of the town included Greeks and Orientals, as is shown by inscriptions found there; like *Luguvalium* (Carlisle), Corstopitum no doubt depended for its prosperity on the market provided by the troops massed along the line of Hadrian's Wall, for whom its temples and shops would make the place an attractive leave-centre; but other sources of wealth were the minerals which then as now were mined in the surrounding district (lead and iron and coal), the corn which came to fill its granaries, and trade with the Barbarians beyond the Wall, who were allowed in Britain, as on other Roman frontiers, to deal with the inhabitants of the Empire.

At the close of the third century came a set-back; as Albinus had done a hundred years before, the usurper Allectus in A.D. 296 took all the troops away from the northern frontier in a last desperate effort to beat off the invading army of the central government under Constantius Chlorus; and again the first step needed after the suppression of the usurper was the restoration of the frontier. Corstopitum had shared in the destruction that overtook the Wall and its forts, and it fell to Constantius to rebuild it. At this period the roads were remade at a higher level, and the buildings repaired, some of them almost from foundation-level; the two military compounds were united, and the military garrison perhaps somewhat increased in strength. It seems possible that the town grew larger still during the generation of peace that followed. But soon after A.D. 340 the situation in the north of Britain began to grow worse; the Picts (of whom we hear for the first time when Constantius fought against them after his recovery of Britain) began to interfere with the dependent tribes across the frontier, and even to threaten Roman territory; and finally in A.D. 367 a concerted attack was made on Britain by Picts, Saxons, Scots and Attacotti. Then, for the first time, Hadrian's Wall fell although its garrison was present—largely, it seems, through the treachery of a native frontier-force known as the *arcani*; and once more Corstopitum was overthrown. The central government took prompt steps to repair the disaster. The emperor Valentinian sent his most able general, Count Theodosius, to take over the British command; and in two years Theodosius and his lieutenant Dulcitus had reorganised the Wall and the coastal defences, which the increasing raids from Ireland and the Low Countries were making even more necessary than the Wall itself.

Its reconstruction by Theodosius is the last certain event in the history

of Corstopitum. At this time a great many inscribed and sculptured stones were used in making up the new level of the main east to west road, opposite the granaries and elsewhere, and the repairs to buildings were of the rough but strong character that has been recognised on Hadrian's Wall as typical of the Theodosian masons. It is possible that at this period the town was given some sort of defences. The excavators of 1906 found traces of a late rampart in the northern part of the site, close to the modern road, and 'the old *agger* which encompassed the higher ground', cleared away in 1800-10, may have been part of the same scheme. Hitherto Corstopitum, like the civilian villages (*vici*) that grew up outside the forts on the Wall, had seemed to need no special defences; now, when the villagers were deserting their settlements and taking shelter in the forts themselves, conditions were too insecure, and the outlook too unpromising, for this precaution to be neglected.

The recorded history of the north of Britain after this time is brief and vague. In A.D. 383 the general Maximus (best known to English readers by Rudyard Kipling's charming romance of the Wall in *Puck of Pook's Hill*) took his troops over to the Continent to fight for the Empire as Albinus had done long before, only to be defeated and killed at Aquileia in 388. Britain once more came under the central government, but whether, as Kipling suggested, the Wall was reoccupied, we do not know. In 396 some reorganisation of the British frontier is recorded by the poet Claudian; in 407 another adventurer, the usurper Constantine, led the bulk of the army of Britain on a last expedition to the Continent; and in 410 the emperor Honorius in effect renounced the claims of the Empire to the control of the island in the edict by which he advised the local authorities in Britain to take steps for their own preservation.

It is not impossible that the townspeople of Corstopitum survived to provide one such centre of resistance. The series of dated coins comes to an end a few years before A.D. 400, but many of the later issues show signs of great wear, and may well have continued in circulation for another generation or more; and a number of coins have been found there, the style of which suggests that they were minted early in the fifth century by some local ruler whose moneymen took coins of the House of Valentinian as their model. Similar coins have been found at Binchester (*Vinovia*) in County Durham. Here we have a suggestion of a sub-Roman authority, perhaps with Corstopitum as its seat, functioning after the last Roman troops had left the Wall.

Whether it survived to give battle to the Anglian invaders, or its inhabitants had fallen back into Cumberland (where a British king still ruled in the seventh century) before the first Anglian settlers made a



home for themselves at Corbridge, the excavations on the site have not told us. But in later times, until the rise of Newcastle and the chain of castles north of it diverted traffic from Dere Street to the coastal plain, the strategic position of Corbridge kept it in the main stream of Northumbrian history. It was in this neighbourhood that St. Oswald and his army turned at bay against the forces of Cadwalla, King of North Wales, that had pursued them northward along Dere Street, and won the battle of Heavenfield (A.D. 634) that brought salvation to Anglian Northumbria, and its conversion to Christianity. Down Dere Street from the north came many a Scottish army, such as that of King David I, which stayed at Corbridge for a time in 1138; and it was the Roman road-system, still in use for all its ruinous state, that led the army of Henry VI's Queen Margaret to its disastrous defeat at Hexham, by the side of the branch-road to Whitley Castle, in 1464.

Description of the remains

THE portion of the site ranking as an ancient monument under the Ministry of Public Building and Works was presented to the nation by Mr. David Cuthbert of Beaufront Castle; it is approached by a road that turns off from the main road a few yards west of Corchester School. Within the Ministry's enclosure are the central administrative buildings, a large part of the military compounds and the series of temples, which together constitute the most interesting portion of the third-century lay-out of the site; the less crowded outer fringes of the town, partly excavated in the period 1906-14, and the cemeteries that lined the roads which led from it, are now covered by grass or arable fields, and it is likely to be a long time before more is known of them; the remains of the Tyne bridge await inspection only when the river is low enough for the foundations of its piers to be made out by those who are prepared to paddle. Inside the enclosure, there is still a good deal of excavation to be done before the whole series of successive structures can be fully understood, and a decision reached as to what can be left permanently exposed to view, and what must be filled in again; the present guide takes into account the position reached by the summer of 1953.

A car-park is provided at the end of the approach-road, close to the museum and the Durham University Excavation Committee's laboratory and workshop. In the following description it will be assumed that the reader has called at the office, where copies of this guide may be obtained from the custodian, and that he proceeds to examine first the buildings on the north side of the main east to west road, which represents one short length of the Stanegate, to which reference has already been made. It will be seen that the first visible portion of it has been left exposed at a higher level than the rest; this represents the final reconstruction of it, at a level several feet above the original metalling, in A.D. 368 or 369.

The granaries. These are oblong buildings, provided with external buttresses to take the weight of heavy stone-slate roofs. The floors are of stone flags raised on low sleeper-walls, and between the buttresses are openings through the walls to allow free circulation of air beneath the floor, so that the grain stored in them could be kept dry. The ventilators of the east granary (No. VII, 86 ft by 25 ft 6 in.) were divided by stone mullions, one of which is still in place; in this granary, in its final form, a central row of columns gave support to the roof. Both granaries have their entrance at the south end, fronting on the Stanegate; here there were raised loading-platforms, each provided with a roof supported on pillars whose bases still remain, so that the corn would be transferred under cover from cart to granary. The raising of

the road-level involved the disappearance of these platforms, and the lower part of the pillars was embedded in the new metalling, to be uncovered again when the granaries were excavated. Both buildings have been largely reconstructed in the Roman period; the west granary (No. X, 92 ft 6 in. by 23 ft 6 in.) in particular has been rebuilt almost from the foundations. During one such reconstruction, probably in the times of Constantius, the builders re-used part of an altar that had been set up by an officer who was 'in charge of the granaries during the most fortunate British expedition,' which must have been the Scottish campaign of Severus and his sons; it has been established by excavation that it was in the time of Severus that the two granaries were built, but they occupy the site of earlier structures of the same kind, some fragments of which remain to be seen, at the north end of the west granary, on either side of its north wall. Two successive floor-levels, and corresponding levels in its ventilator-shafts, can be seen in this building; the building-inscription of A.D. 139 was found, face downwards, re-used as a flag in the upper floor.

The fountain. Immediately to the east of the granaries are the remains of an elaborate fountain (No. VIII), to which water was brought from a spring somewhere to the north; in its earlier stages the feed-channel was probably below ground-level, but as it approached the fountain it was carried on a raised foundation of rubble set in clay and faced on each side in coursed masonry, a length of which is now visible: the water ran in a channel of large blocks of stone, originally covered by flat slabs and sealed by a mound of clay, now removed. The fountain proper consisted of a decorative fountain-house, designed in the fashion of a shrine, to judge by architectural remains of its structure found on the site, with an inscription (a mere fragment of which survives, now in the museum) recording its erection by the Twentieth Legion; in front of it was an aeration-cistern into which the water discharged, probably through a pair of spouts, and from this it passed into a large oblong tank, from which water could be drawn at need, the overflow passing southward to feed additional tanks on the other side of the Stanegate. In a modification or reconstruction of the original scheme, pedestals to carry statues were added on either side, at a time when the drawing-tank itself was rebuilt at a high level. It will be noticed that the sides of this later tank have been worn down so extensively, probably by continued use of them for sharpening knives or swords, that in its later stages it can no longer have been of any use, and buckets must have been placed on its floor to receive water spouting direct from the aeration-cistern. The outflow drain passed at an angle below the Stanegate, reinforced by the main drain which took surface water away

*The water tank and the site of the fountain and aqueduct,
from the south-west*



from round the granaries, towards the additional tanks already referred to, and thence southward towards the river; its course beyond the Ministry's enclosure is not at present known.

The store-house (No. XI). This is one of the largest and most imposing Roman structures surviving anywhere in Britain. It covers more than an acre, and in its present form consists of four ranges of rooms surrounding a central courtyard 165 ft by 150 ft. In the centre of the south range is an entrance from the Stanegate, on to which the rooms in this range opened; the rooms of the west and north ranges opened on to the courtyard; the east range seems to have formed a single long compartment. Structural features in the north range show that it was designed to have a great hall to the north of it; the combination of courtyard and hall is reminiscent of the *forum* and *basilica* which formed the civic centre of a Roman town, or the administrative headquarters of a legionary fortress, which was perhaps what this building was intended for; but the death of Severus in 211, and the changes in military policy which his sons at once made, caused it to be left unfinished. The foundations had been laid all around the courtyard, and some extensive levelling of the site had been done for the purpose: for in the middle of each side the foundation-trenches were cut into the existing occupation levels, while at the ends the level of the ground had to be raised several feet. On these foundations, of river cobbles tightly packed in clay, had been begun the erection of an imposing structure; the walls of the south and side ranges had risen 3 or 4 ft, built of massive 'rusticated' masonry that makes the building, even in its present ruined state, one of the most impressive examples of Roman work to be seen anywhere in Britain. But at the north end the foundations were never built upon; on each side, the plinth course that rests on the masonry footing was left unfinished, with many of its stones still undressed; and the courtyard was never levelled—its centre was left standing well above, its south-west corner mainly below, the level of the surrounding ranges. Subsequently the southern half of the building seems to have been completed, in less massive and expensive style, and occupied as shops or the like until the close of the Roman occupation, but the remains of this secondary phase have now all been removed. The most remarkable late insertion was a small hypocausted building, now likewise removed, at its northern end, where otherwise there was always an open space, used only as a rubbish-tip.

Special interest attaches to two buildings, whose remains occupy part of the southern half of the courtyard. Excavation in 1951-52 showed that the more westerly of the two, part of which underlies the west range of the store-house, was built *circa* A.D. 140 and reconstructed

twenty years later, and that it was the headquarters building of the fort of that period, incorporating portions of a still earlier building of the same type; the best preserved portion of it owes its good condition to the fact that it had not been demolished completely, like the rest of the building, when the change of policy in 211 brought the construction of the 'store-house' to a standstill, and thereafter it was adapted for use, perhaps as a private house: in its original state, it had been the central shrine in the customary range of five rooms in the normal fort headquarters. The other building, the eastern end of which had been cut away when the foundations of the east range were being made, clearly belongs to the second-century fort likewise and, to judge by its plan, it was the commanding officer's house. These two buildings, and the granaries whose fragmentary remains underlie Nos. X and VII, together represent the central block of that fort, and their identification will make it easier, in future digging, to work out its complete plan.

In the third-century lay-out, a main road northwards branched off from the Stanegate a few yards east of the Ministry's enclosure; it was flanked by a number of the rectangular houses or shops that have already been referred to, but they could not be approached direct from the west by wheeled traffic, for the Stanegate had been blocked by the insertion of two of the remarkable series of temples, the remains of which will be described in the next paragraph. Parts of two similar houses or shops are still to be seen, inside the enclosure, immediately east of No. XI and at a considerably higher level; to judge by the character of their masonry, they are of fourth-century date.

The temples. Opposite the east end of the south range of No. XI there remain the foundations of three rectangular buildings bordering the Stanegate which have been convincingly interpreted as the remains of temples, assignable by their relationship to the road-levels to the early years of the third century. Temple I was a monumental structure standing upon a rectangular platform (*podium*), fronted by a colonnade (the bases of whose columns remain to be viewed) and entered by a central doorway; Temple II was an even more elaborate building, its front being of large ashlar blocks, and with an open courtyard surrounded by a colonnade in front of the platform of the temple proper. The remains of Temple III are now too badly robbed for its original character to be visualised, and in any case it seems likely that, well before the end of the Norman period, its site had been adapted to some industrial purposes. Associated finds did not make it possible to tell what particular deity had been worshipped in any one temple, but the museum contains an exceptionally rich collection of religious sculptures, for the most part found re-used in fourth-century

repairs of the Stanegate, which must have come from these or similar temples on other parts of the site. At least two more temples (VI and VII) stood opposite the granaries, one fronting directly on the south edge of the Stanegate, another facing westwards on a branch road.

Military compounds. The greater part of the area south of the Stanegate and within the Ministry's enclosure is occupied by the northern portion of two military compounds, which constitute perhaps the most remarkable feature of Corstopitum; their original plan has been somewhat obscured by a series of structural alterations, but excavation has made it possible to put forward a reasonably confident account both of that plan and of the principal changes made in it. It will be observed that the two compounds are extremely irregular in shape, having been designed to come as close as possible to the south side of the Stanegate, but without displacing the temples which must already have been standing when the decision was made to provide them; thus the west compound's north wall has a frontage of 100 ft on the Stanegate, from its rounded north-east angle, but then turns sharply southward before proceeding westward again, now 80 ft away from the road, leaving Temples VI and VII undisturbed; the east compound has an even more tortuous outline, and only at one point does its north wall manage to front, for a mere 20 ft, on the Stanegate. The compounds are surrounded by walls five feet thick, with a chamfered plinth at ground-level on the outer side, and face one another across a street which runs southward from rather west of the centre of No. XI. Each of them had a gateway of ornamental rather than defensive type, from which a road parallel to the Stanegate ran past buildings, the character of which will be described presently, to the entrance of a small headquarters building. Before the two compounds are described in detail, it may be noted that in the reconstruction of the site *circa* 300, they were united; a connecting wall was built from the northern projection of the east one to join the north-east corner of that on the west; in this new wall are the remains of an unusual gateway, with a single bastion projecting from its western side, so as to take attackers in the unprotected right flank. In the southward street blocked by the wall just described will be seen two tanks, sunk into the ground and originally lined with lead, into which water from the fountain flowed, to be drawn hence by buckets; no doubt each was provided for the occupants of one of the two compounds, who can be shown by a study of associated remains to have been legionary craftsmen, stationed at Corstopitum to provide what may be described as the Army Ordnance services for the garrison of the Wall.

The east compound. Immediately inside its gateway and on the north

side of its main road there stood originally two small houses that seem to represent accommodation for officers (No. XXXIX); it is still possible to make out their original plan, each consisting of a series of rooms round a small central courtyard; but later alterations have involved drastic modification in lay-out. The two buildings were thrown into one, and extended northwards up to the wall of the compound, now dismantled; the southern part of the single large house thus formed provided living-accommodation, while at the north end there were two cart-sheds or stables, with double doors, opening on to a yard approached from the east side of the building. In its latest days the central part of it was used by a potter, who built his kiln in one of the rooms, where it was found by the excavators along with a quantity of unused clay and wasters and finished goods that had been made in it. This is not the only evidence for the manufacture of pottery at Corstopitum; here and there fragments of a distinctive class of pottery, with moulded figures on it, have been found; and in one case the actual mould was discovered (see opposite), showing the figure of the Celtic god Taranis, with his distinctive wheel and a crooked stick that gave rise to the description of him as 'Harry Lauder'. The next building to the east (No. XLI) seems to represent accommodation for other ranks; like No. XXXIX, it has a curiously irregular ground-level, having been built at right-angles to the line of a sharply cambered road of the second century and to the ditches of the first-century fort; it is not clear to what extent the third-century builders accommodated their structures to the irregularity of the surface, or whether later subsidence is to blame for the present crazy effect, which is noticeable in the west compound also. Next comes a smaller building (No. XLII) of uncertain purpose, and beyond it a small store-house at the north end of the headquarters. The latter building has been robbed of almost all its masonry in post-Roman times, but the clay and cobble foundations remained undisturbed and now show its outline (though the clay has been replaced by cement); the building consisted of a narrow passage running its full width, off which opened three rooms, of which that in the centre was a chapel with a rearward apse, and those on either side were offices for the clerks of the detachment which occupied this compound. Behind the headquarters are the remains of two buildings, both with apsidal ends, which have been interpreted as the *scholae* or club-rooms and shrines combined, which the N.C.O.s and craftsmen of the Roman army of the third century resorted to in off-duty hours. The buildings on the south side of the main street of this compound remain insufficiently examined for their character to be known, and they lie for the most part under the grass, outside the Ministry's

The Celtic God Taranis
(from a pottery mould found at Corbridge)



enclosure, but it is known that the south wall of the compound runs nearly 200 ft beyond the Ministry's fence, close to the lip of the steep slope down towards the river.

The west compound. The headquarters building (No. XLV) to which the main street of this compound leads was larger and more impressive, both in its original form and after a series of structural alterations, than that which we have already described. In its original form it consisted of a rectangular hall, probably partitioned off into three compartments each with its own doorway on to the street; the central doorway seems



to have been both wider and more lofty than those on either side of it, providing a view across the hall into the central one of a range of three rooms, here too to be interpreted as a chapel flanked by offices. In the front part of the chapel a flight of steps led down to a sunken strong-room, once covered by a barrel-vault, below the southern office, in which the original excavators found the fine altar-like pedestal with a dedication by the Second Legion to the Discipline of the Emperors, now in the museum. In the Constantian reconstruction, when the two compounds were thrown into one, this headquarters continued in use, though with some modifications. An apse was added to the west end of the chapel, while a fresh suite of rooms (one of them perhaps a bath) was added at the north side and a narrow compartment along the east front. The buildings now visible on either side of the road from the compound gateway are workshops, in which legionary craftsmen were

employed in the manufacture and repair of weapons and tools; their original symmetrical planning has been partially obscured by subsequent modifications and the activities of post-Roman stone-robbers, but the basic design, something like a stumpy capital I, with a central lengthwise partition, can still be made out; one or two of the metal-workers' hearths or forges may be seen also. Immediately north of the gateway, the compound wall was breached, in the Constantian reconstruction, to permit the insertion of a *schola*, rather larger than those already referred to, fronting on the north-south street. It is a rectangular structure, with an apse at its west end, and with a verandah along its east front in its first form at least; later in the fourth century it was enlarged and altered, new rooms being added to north and west—it may be to provide living-accommodation.

The 'pottery-shop'. Temple VI occupies that part of site IV (as numbered in the original excavations) which has been known since its excavation as the 'pottery-shop'. Here were found quantities of pottery lying as if it had fallen from shelves on which different classes of ware had been stored—here samian dishes and cups, there *mortaria*. Much of the pottery is certainly dateable to the latter part of the second century, and the destruction of the shop or store in which it was kept must have been that which involved Corstopitum and the Wall when Albinus was fighting against Severus in Gaul (A.D. 197); its survival undisturbed by later activities on the site was due to the debris having been incorporated in the *podium* of the temple; a group of later pottery was found a little further south, and seems to represent a similar disaster, probably that of A.D. 367, overwhelming a building adjacent to the temple: the excavators took both deposits to come from the same shop, but their careful description makes it possible to put forward the new interpretation here offered. In the fourth century, the temple itself may have been given over to more mundane uses; either in it or next door to it a blacksmith seems to have had his shop, for the excavators found masses of iron there and a pair of tongs.

For nearly 100 yards westwards from here both sides of the Stanegate were lined with houses of the rectangular type already described, occupied by workers of different kinds, whose activity it was possible for the excavators to trace in a number of instances by the furnaces or ovens in their workshops; and although the structural remains here do not seem to be earlier than the third century, it is probable that similar buildings, perhaps of wood, occupied this part of the site in the second century; at that stage they would come in the civilian settlement outside the west wall of the fort of the period. The lower occupation-levels produced quantities of second-century pottery, and in one place (site

XXIX) a far more noteworthy find—a bronze jug, now to be seen in the museum, containing 160 gold coins, ranging in date from A.D. 64 to 160. How this hoard came to be concealed, and why it was never recovered, are questions that will never be answered with certainty, though it may be noted that the whole site seems to have been re-designed, a few years after 160, by the governor Calpurnius Agricola, and it may be that the house, below whose floor the jug had been buried for safe custody, was swept away in the process, so that the man who had hidden the coins was unable to locate their hiding-place again. This is the largest hoard of Roman gold coins yet found in Britain; it is now kept together in the Department of Coins at the British Museum, but there is a complete set of electrotype reproductions in the museum. Another hoard of gold coins was found in a building north of the granaries (No. XII, opposite the car-park); this contained 48 coins ranging in date from A.D. 364 to 388, and a gold ring; electrotypes of these coins also may be seen in the museum. Brief notes follow on certain other structures, outside the Ministry's enclosure and now covered over again, examined in the excavations of 1906-14.

The corridor-house. The largest house discovered at Corstopitum stood half-way down the slope, on the east side of Dere Street, which runs down to the river and the bridge 100 yards west of the granaries; it was a rectangular block, with its main axis running east and west, and facing south. In front of it was a terrace, and a tower that seems to have been designed to give the occupants of the house as good a view as possible of the valley of the Tyne. The house itself was about 150 ft long and 70 ft from front to back, and included an elaborate suite of baths. In type it bore a close resemblance to the larger town-houses of the south of Britain, and it must have been occupied by people of considerable wealth and importance, and perhaps of official standing; it was larger and more pretentious than the residence provided for the commander of a cavalry regiment, for example at Chesters (*Cilurnum*) on the Wall. The sculptured fountain-head that is now well known as the Corbridge Lion (see p. 29) was found in this building.

Other buildings. Among the buildings now underlying the field north of the Ministry's enclosure were two long rectangular structures (Nos. XVII and LVI), both of which seem to have been about 142 ft from north to south and 26 ft from east to west; both were provided with external buttresses, like the granaries already described: clear evidence for their date was not forthcoming, and it is not easy to fit them into the same lay-out as that now visible, or to decide whether they are of an earlier period. Between them stood a smaller building (No. XVII East), originally measuring 46 ft from east to west by 18 ft from north

to south, divided into three rooms, of which the western two were entered by doors in the centre of their south sides. Subsequently these doors were walled up, and the building was converted into a suite of baths; hypocausts were inserted in each room, and apses at the north side of each of the end rooms, while a stoke-hole was added at the west end. In the latter part of the occupation it is possible that a potter used this building; a large number of roughly cylindrical clay objects, that have been described as 'hand-bricks' and explained as stands for keeping pottery apart either during the drying process or in the kiln, were found here. Immediately to the north of this building was an iron-smelting furnace in which was found a mass of iron 3 ft 4 in. long, which is the largest piece of Roman iron yet found in Britain. It has been variously described as a lump of pig-iron or as an anvil of primitive type, but its use remains obscure. To the south of this building and parallel to it lay another (No. XIV), 54 ft long by 23 ft from north to south; it was divided internally into six compartments each 7 ft wide, and each containing the bases of three square pillars. The building had been so thoroughly demolished in Roman times that it was not possible to discover what entrance or entrances it may have had; it was probably another granary, provided with a rather different system of ventilation from that normally met with. Below the southernmost pillar in the east compartment was found a late first-century rubbish-pit, and among the higher levels that covered the building was part of a small black pottery cup that has been attributed to the Anglian period; two burials of that period have been found a little further south of this building and north of No. XII. After the building had been demolished, huts of some kind, the floors of which alone survived, were noted by the excavators to have been erected on its site, and the clay bank that carried the feed-channel to the fountain passed at an angle across its east end.

The bridge. The best way to reach the bridge is by a lane that leads along the river side from the west end of Corbridge village; it cannot be reached conveniently now from Corstopitum itself. In Roman times the course of the Tyne seems to have been somewhat less straight than at the present day in its passage past the site; the Roman bridge, the remains of which now lie at an angle to the course of the river, probably crossed it at right-angles then. It consisted of two massive abutments, similar to the east abutment of the bridge that carried the Wall over the North Tyne at Chesters, and ten piers, the upstream ends of which were pointed; the superstructure, as in many Roman bridges of this size, was probably of wood. From end to end the bridge was 154 yards long (only 20 yards less than the seventeenth-century bridge

at Corbridge); the piers were 29 ft wide, so that the roadway was probably about 20 ft wide: a model in the museum gives an impression of the method of construction and of the probable appearance of a section of the bridge. The south abutment and the first five piers from the south end can still be seen when the river is low, but the rest of the piers and the north abutment are buried by the accumulation of soil, carried down by the river, that forms a level platform from the present bank to the beginning of the slope up to Corstopitum.

The museum

OF the objects found at Corstopitum up to 1906, the greater part has been dispersed or lost, such as the collection of gems and coins formed by an eighteenth-century vicar of Corbridge; a number of the inscribed and sculptured stones can now be seen in the Black Gate Museum at Newcastle upon Tyne, while others are built into the walls of Hexham Priory, or of houses in Corbridge; and no doubt many of the surrounding houses contain further such stones. The present collection on the site dates almost entirely from 1906; it is housed in a semi-permanent building, first put up by the original Corbridge Excavation Committee, and responsibility for the display of the collection rests with the Trustees of that committee's funds, in close and friendly co-operation with the Ancient Monuments Department and the Durham University Excavation Committee. The museum is of three rooms, the principal contents of which will be referred to briefly in the following paragraphs.

Central room. On its west side, facing the entrance, are placed the important building-inscriptions—two assignable to A.D. 139 and 140 respectively, recording work by the Second Legion in the governorship of Lollius Urbicus, a large slab (reconstructed from a number of fragments) dated to 163 and recording construction by the Twentieth Legion in the governorship of Calpurnius Agricola, and the dedication of a temple to 'the unconquered Sun' by a detachment of the Sixth Legion under the latter governor. At the north end of the room stands the Corbridge Lion; it is a rugged piece of work, in which a popular Roman *motif*—a lion devouring a stag—has been treated uncouthly but impressively by a local sculptor who can hardly have seen a real lion (see p. 29). At the south end is a pediment, now somewhat defaced, showing Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf—a favourite subject for Roman sculptors; it probably comes from a temple dedicated to Rome itself, as do the sculptured panels below, on which a faun and a nymph (the latter restored in white paint on plaster) are seen in a rural setting, represented by vines bearing clusters of grapes and standing in two-handled cups at either side, while a central tree in a larger cup divides the scene into two parts. Along the centre of the room are table-cases, principally devoted to displaying small objects of bronze—brooches and the like—and at their south end stands the inscribed pedestal 'to the Discipline of the Emperors', found tumbled into the sunken strong-room of the west compound (see p. 22), and next to it an altar to 'celestial Brigantia', the goddess of the Brigantes here assuming an attribute of the consort of an eastern Baal, Juppiter of Doliche, who is associated with her and with 'Salus', the deity of health, by its dedicator, a centurion of the Sixth Legion. On the east side of the room are further table-cases; some of them display items of

military equipment, including parts of two ornamental parade-helmets, probably of the first or early second century, such as have been found complete at Newstead near Melrose; iron spear-heads and shanks, arrow-heads and caltrops; an entrenching tool; bits and spurs and horse-shoes; and two strengtheners from the tips of horn bows, the characteristic weapon of Syrian archers, a battalion of whom was stationed in the second century at Carvoran on the Wall. Other cases on this side contain tools of all kinds for masons and carpenters, blacksmiths and leather-workers, as well as farmers and gardeners; it will be seen that there has been little change in the form of domestic implements since the Roman period; except that they are made of iron instead of steel, many of the objects from Corstopitum might be paralleled in a modern ironmonger's shop. On the wall of this side, to the left as one enters the museum, hang the electrotype replicas of the two hoards of gold coins (see p. 24).

North room. Inscriptions and sculptures in this room include the altar set up by an officer in charge of the granaries in the time of Severus (see p. 14); and three tombstones, found re-used as flags in late repairs to roadways on the central part of the site, but no doubt originally set up in cemeteries on its outskirts. One of them commemorates one Barates from Palmyra in the Syrian desert; he married a British wife, Regina, to whose memory he erected an elaborate tombstone that was found some years ago at South Shields, and is now in the Roman Museum there; a photograph of it hangs on the wall here. The other two tombstones commemorate children; one was a child of five, Ahtehe (the name seems to be Germanic), daughter of Nobilis, recorded in unusually large and deeply cut lettering, above which is a crude head-and-shoulders relief; the other text was set up by one Sudrenus in memory of his daughter Ertola, nicknamed Vellibia, and above it the child is shown full length as a somewhat ungainly figure, holding a ball tightly with both hands. Other stones here include part of a panel on which, between pilasters, stands a *vexillum* (flag) of the Second Legion—though the stone-cutter's Latin was faulty and he called it a *vexillus*; a vigorous relief of Hercules with his club, supported by Minerva, found in the chapel of the west compound; the head and shoulders of the Sun-god, in low relief, with a rayed crown; a damaged relief of Castor or Pollux, holding a spear and leading his charger (once a particularly spirited work of art); and several fragments, conjoined, from a long and elaborate frieze, divided into several scenes, in one of which the Sun-god is seen riding towards the dwelling of Castor or Pollux. The other exhibits here are principally pottery of British manufacture, including some made at Corstopitum itself, and



glass vessels of all kinds, mainly represented by fragments; special attention may be drawn, however, to Roman writing equipment, including portions of unspillable ink-pots and the model of a wooden writing-tablet, and surgical implements and, in the centre-case, cowbells and keys and other metal objects, gaming counters and dice.

South room. Among the large number of the smaller inscribed and sculptured stones in this room are part of a slab recording building carried out by a detachment of the Sixth Legion under Severus's first governor, Virius Lupus, and a fragment from a dedication to Mars the Avenger by a detachment of the same legion in the governorship of Cn. Iulius Verus, shortly before A.D. 160; the latter text was on the front of a column on which a statue probably stood. But the most remarkable exhibit here is an ordinary building-stone of a type common on the Wall, recording the work of a particular detachment, in this case the seventh cohort of the Twentieth Legion—*leg(io) XX V (aléria) V(ictrix)*; at some time after its cutting somebody in Roman

times has inserted another X after LEG, making it now refer to the Thirtieth Legion—*V(lpia) V(ictrix)*. That legion, so far as we know, was never in Britain; perhaps a former member of it (it is known to have had Britons serving in it), on a visit to Corstopitum, thought to commemorate his old unit in this way—the remarkable thing is that the stone was found some years after the publication of Kipling's story in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, in which the hero Parnesius is 'a Centurion of the Thirtieth'. Attention may also be directed to a dedication by Apollinaris, son of Cassius, to an otherwise unknown god, Arecurius; above is a statue of the god, complete but for the head, which has been dowelled on: in his left hand he holds a scroll, while his right hand is poised over a small altar, on which a cooking-pot stands. Another small slab, 12 in. high and 8 in. wide, shows a woman (whose head and feet have been broken off) apparently churning, or washing clothes in a wash-tub of the kind that is still used in the neighbourhood today; close to it are a small relief of two deities, probably the Celtic Mercury and his consort Rosmerta, seated within a shrine, Mercury being attended by the usual cock, and a relief on which, in low relief, is a winged Victory displaying an ansate panel (on which there was once an inscription, now completely erased), while below recline on the left Neptune holding an anchor, and on the right a helmeted figure, probably Mars. Among a number of statue-heads an emaciated barbarian and a rude face that seems to portray some fourth-century emperor may be mentioned. Other exhibits in this room include a representative selection of the red-glazed samian ware which was imported into Britain in large quantities, from southern Gaul in the first century and from central Gaul and the Rhineland in the second; there is also the model of a portion of the Tyne bridge, already referred to.





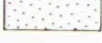
The greater part of the rich collection of coins, metal objects and pottery cannot be displayed in the limited space available, but students can obtain access to it. And reference must also be made to one category of finds, unsuitable for display but throwing interesting light on the occupation of the site. Besides pottery and small objects of metal, excavations on the scale of those at Corstopitum always produce large quantities of bones, and those found there give an interesting picture of the domesticated and wild animals of the north of Britain during the Roman period. Domestic animals included horses of three main breeds, the largest of about 14 hands, the other two corresponding in size to the New Forest and the Exmoor pony respectively; among the cattle there were several varieties, including one that closely resembled the wild cattle of Chillingham; the sheep were mostly small, and resembled the modern Black-faced breed. Only one goat was represented, but

there were several sucking-pigs, as well as full-grown specimens that may have been wild boar. Dogs were numerous, and included (apparently) both whippets and dachshunds; some cats' bones were found, though it was not possible to say whether they were of the domestic or of the wild cat. Wild animals included red and roe deer, products of hunting no doubt, as well as fox, badger, beaver, water-vole, hare (but not rabbit) and mole; and, like most Roman sites in Britain, Corstopitum has yielded innumerable oyster-shells.

CONVERSION TABLE

Page 5	60 ft	18.2 m
Page 14	86 ft	26.2 m
	25 ft 6 in.	7.8 m
Page 15	92 ft 6 in.	28.2 m
	23 ft 6 in.	7.2 m
Page 17	165 ft	50.3 m
	150 ft	45.7 m
	3 ft	0.9 m
	4 ft	1.2 m
Page 19	100 ft	30.5 m
	80 ft	24.4 m
	20 ft	6.1 m
Page 21	200 ft	60.9 m
Page 24	100 yards	91.4 m
	150 ft	45.7 m
	70 ft	21.3 m
	142 ft	43.3 m
	26 ft	7.9 m
	46 ft	14 m
	18 ft	5.5 m
Page 25	3 ft 4 in.	1 m
	54 ft	16.4 m
	23 ft	6.7 m
	7 ft	2.1 m
	154 yards	140.8 m
	20 yards	18.2 m
Page 26	29 ft	26.5 m
	20 ft	6.1 m
Page 30	12 in.	0.3 m
	8 in.	0.2 m

CORBRIDGE ROMAN STATION

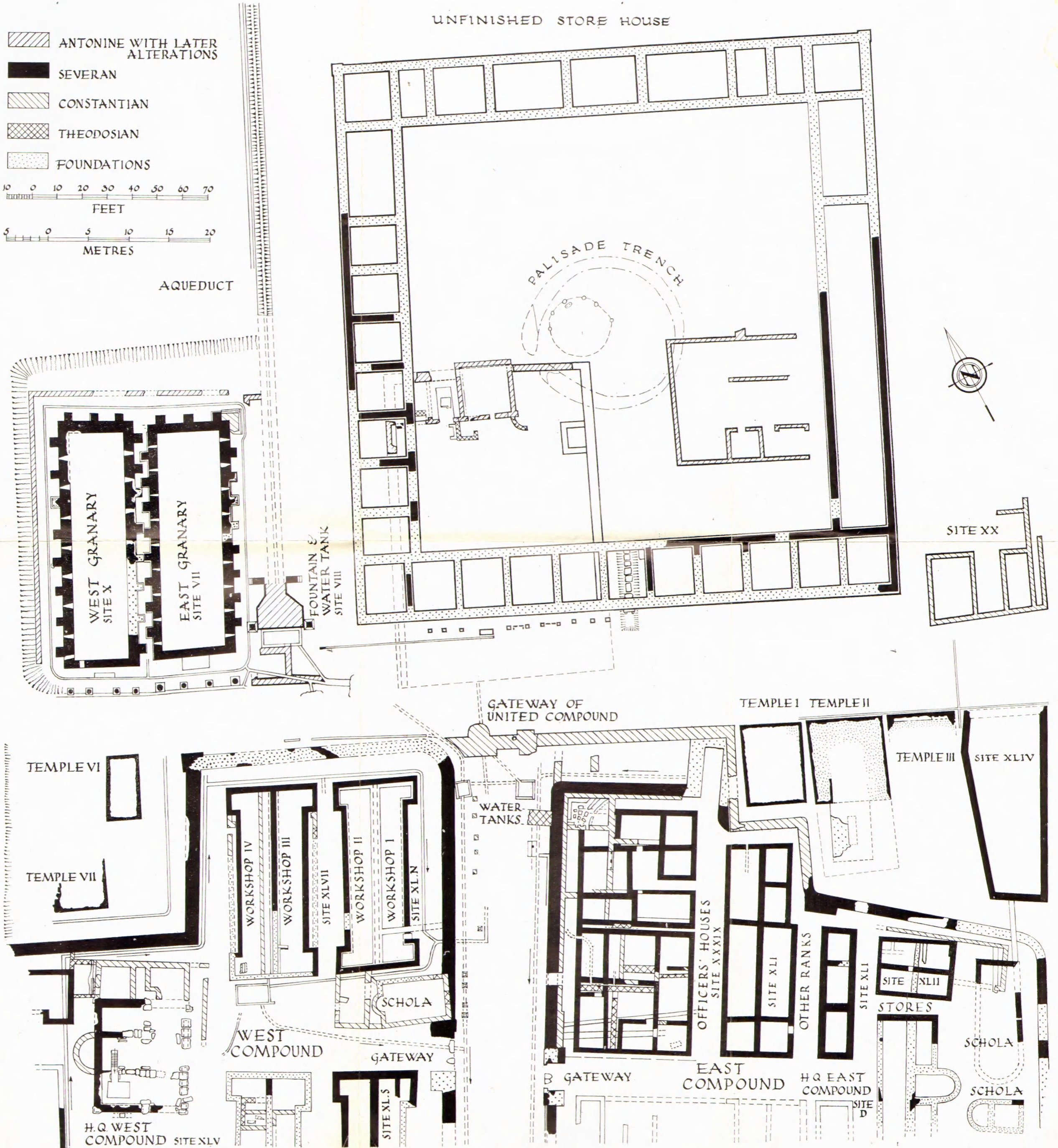
-  ANTONINE WITH LATER ALTERATIONS
-  SEVERAN
-  CONSTANTIAN
-  THEodosian
-  FOUNDATIONS

10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
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UNFINISHED STORE HOUSE



CONVER

Page 5

Page 14

Page 15

Page 17

Page 19

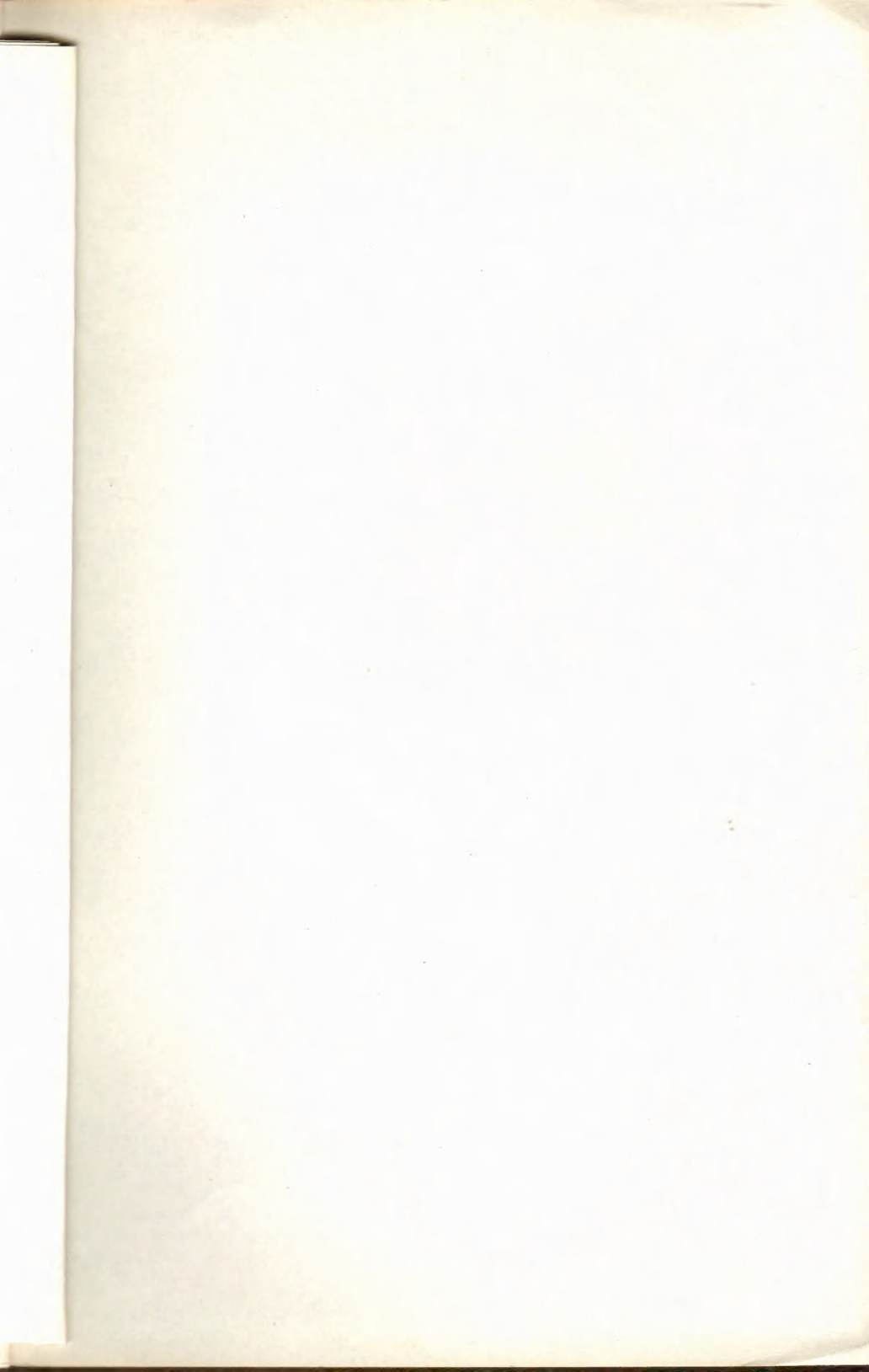
Page 21

Page 24

Page 25

Page 26

Page 30



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